DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 202 182 EC 132 820

AUTHOR Lundy, John P., Ed.; Zajac, Mary, Ed.
TITLE You and Your Child: Determining the Least Restrictive Environment. A Conference for Parents and Educators of Handicapped Children (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, May 17, 1980).
SPONS AGENCY Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny County, Pa.; Frick Educational Commission, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Pittsburgh Foundation, Pa.
PUB DATE Jan 81
NOTE 43p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Ancillary School Services; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Mainstreaming; *Parent Role; Resource Room Programs; Special Classes; *Student Placement; Teacher Education; Vocational Education; Workshops

ABSTRACT

The proceedings of a workshop for parents and educators of handicapped children focuses on least restrictive environment. Three papers introduce the workshop: "Special Education: The Development of Services" (M. Reynolds); "Least Restrictive Environment: Decision Making" (H. Sobehart); and "Communication and Conferencing Skills for Parents" (J. Lanz). Four panel workshops examine placement options: a regular class with supportive services, a part time special class in a regular school, a full time special class in a regular school, and a special class in a special school. J. Birch and M. Reynolds present the keynote address: "Seven Big Ideas About Mainstreaming in U.S. Public Schools." Three workshops consider implementation: "Changes in Teacher Education: A Positive Response to P.L. 94-142" (C. Hunter); "Problems: Communicating Concerns" (D. Ewonce, et al.); and "Vocational Opportunities in the Least Restrictive Environment" (A. Adduci, et al.). An open panel of state and local administrators concludes the proceedings. (CL)

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YOU AND YOUR CHILD
DETERMINING THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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A Conference for Parents and Educators of Handicapped Children

Sponsored by

The Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny County
The Frick Educational Commission, and
The Pittsburgh Foundation

May 17, 1980
Holiday Inn, Greentree
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Edited by John P. Lundy

Funding for the production and distribution of the proceedings was provided by the Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny County, the Frick Educational Commission, and the Pittsburgh Foundation.

Points of view or opinions expressed here in do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the funding agencies.

January, 1981

EC132820

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Parents and educators alike recognize the need to increase their skills in order to more effectively make decisions in regard to the education of handicapped children. The passage of Public Law 94-142 has required such decisions be made on the basis not only of what is instructionally appropriate for a child, but also according to what is least restrictive.

On May 17, 1980, 146 individuals attended a workshop in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to share information on the concepts of the "least restrictive environment" and mainstreaming, and to discuss the necessary considerations in determining appropriate placements for children. National, regional, and local experts provided both general information and specific examples of how the "L.R.E." mandate of P.L. 94-142 can be, and is being, met.

The program format for the workshop was developed over a six month period by a committee of parents, educators, and community representatives. Special thanks is extended to the following individuals who contributed greatly to every aspect of the conference:

Gary Baughman, *Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny*
Ruth Drescher, *United Mental Health*
Dr. Julia Ann Hartzog, *Duquesne University*
Barbara Hast, *Pittsburgh Public Schools*
James Hollohan, *United Cerebral Palsy*
Catherine Feather, *Parent*
Robert Follette, *Allegheny Intermediate Unit*
Constance Hunter, *Duquesne University (Consultant)*
Florence Iwler, *Moon Area School District*
Joan Kost, *Parent, Allegheny Intermediate Unit Task Force*
Dr. Theresa Laurie, *University of Pittsburgh (Consultant)*
Barbara Matera, *Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny*
Pat McClinchie, *Parent, Association for Children with Learning Disabilities*
Daniel Moore, *Mount Lebanon School District*
Helen Sobehart, *Allegheny Intermediate Unit*
Judy Stewart, *Parent*
Dr. Joseph Yukish, *Duquesne University*
Diane Zerega, *Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Network*

The success of the conference can be directly attributed to the cooperative planning efforts demonstrated by this group. Each individual and agency represented made significant contributions to the conference planning, production, and follow up.

This report includes presentations made by 32 conference participants. Gratitude is extended to all participants for sharing their knowledge and personal experiences. In addition, all who attended are to be commended for giving their time, input, and constructive criticism.

The conference was a clear demonstration of the powerful effect of parents working in tandem with educators. It is hoped that this involvement and commitment will result in improved educational opportunities for handicapped students in the future.

Mary Zajac
Conference Chairperson

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INTRODUCTION

The major goal of the workshop was to identify learning experiences which enhance the ability of parents to work with educators in making educational decisions. Because Least Restrictive Environment is a relatively new and complex concept, the workshop focused on the decision making process for determining least restrictive placements for children.

This goal was to be reached by concentrating on the following objectives:

1. To provide information on past and present practices for integrating exceptional children into society, in general, and into the educational system, in particular.

2. To provide parents with examples of a variety of programs in Least Restrictive Environments.

3. To prepare parents to evaluate a program option for its ability to meet their child's needs.

4. To provide a perspective on attitudes towards integration of exceptional individuals.

5. To prepare parents for a more active role in determining their own child's educational program.

6. To prepare parents for a more active role in assisting school districts to develop appropriate educational programs for all children.

7. To provide information on the laws which mandate Least Restrictive Environment and the rationale behind them.

8. To inform parents of available resources for further information on integration and education in the Least Restrictive Environment.

THE AGENDA FOR THE WORKSHOP WAS AS FOLLOWS:

8:30 - 9:00	Registration
9:00 - 9:30	Opening Address Special Education: The Development of Services
9:30 - 10:45	Least Restrictive Environment: Decision Making Communication and Conferencing Skills for Parents
10:45 - 11:00	Break
11:00 - 12:00	Concurrent Workshops: Options for Placement — A Regular Class with Supportive Services — A Part-Time Special Class in a Regular School — A Full-Time Special Class in a Regular School — A Special Class in a Special School
12:00 - 1:30	Lunch with Keynote Address Seven Big Ideas About Mainstreaming in U.S. Public Schools
1:30 - 2:30	Concurrent Workshops: Options for Placement (Repeated)
2:30 - 3:30	Concurrent Workshops: Making It Work — Normalization and Integration of Severely Handicapped Students — Attitudes of Non-handicapped Students — Changes in Teacher Education: A Positive Response to P.L. 94-142 — Problems: Communicating Concerns — Vocational Opportunities in the Least Restrictive Environment
3:30 - 3:45	Break
3:45 - 4:30	Open Panel of State and Local Administrators

Each presentation was taped and later edited for inclusion in this report. While the following material accurately presents content, it cannot fully capture the stimulating discussions, comments, and questions which the workshop sessions generated. It is hoped, however, that this publication will encourage parents and educators to seek more information and to become fully involved in making decisions in the best interest of children.

Special Education: The Development of Services

MAYNARD C. REYNOLDS, Ph. D.

Dr. Reynolds is a Professor in the Department of Psychoeducational Studies at the University of Minnesota and the Director of the National Support Systems Project, an organization funded by the Office of Special Education, U. S. Department of Education. The National Support Systems Project provides technical assistance to almost 100 colleges or departments of education which hold Deans' Grants (awarded by the Office of Special Education) for the purpose of up-dating teacher education programs. Dr. Reynolds is widely known for his activities in behalf of handicapped children and youth. He is the author and/or editor of many publications.

Abstract

A variety of educational services are needed by school systems in order to effectively serve exceptional children. The availability of this range of services is at the basis of the concept of least restrictive environment.

History

Until very recently, the history of Special Education in this country could be described as a two-box arrangement: special education versus regular education. When screening or observation suggested that a child might have a problem, the child would be sent to a testing center where his or her performance on certain measures would be compared to predetermined standards. As a result, the child then would be classified for placement in the regular education box or the special education box. In those days, regular and special education were operated as parallel systems; each had its own teachers, administrators, and even funding. A child placed in the special education box seldom was moved out of it.

Beginning in the 1960s (even earlier, in some places), this simplistic arrangement began to break up. It had become apparent to many educators that the boundaries between regular and special education were artificial and that good, effective special education could be delivered in a variety of administrative arrangements. This development became known as the "service cascade". Visually, the cascade looks like a triangle. (See Figure 1). The broad base represents the regular classroom. It is the natural environment in which most children are educated. Some students, however, need more support than the regular classroom can offer so they are candidates for the next level: the regular classroom with consultative assistance. Here, consultant teachers come into the regular classroom environment to assist the classroom teacher to meet pupils' special needs. An itinerant teacher also may come into the regular classroom to work directly with a student. The deployment of specialists into the regular environment greatly increases the ability of the regular classroom teacher to meet individual children's needs.

For students who need greater support, resource rooms and part- or full-time special classes in a regular education building provide the next level of service. Although at these levels children receive specialized services apart from the regular classroom, they are still in the natural environment of community and neighborhood school.

Finally, at the top of the cascade is the provision of services in full-time special programs in special places, such as special day schools or residential schools.

By breaking the boundaries of the two-box system and developing an entire cascade of administrative arrangements to deliver its services to children, special education advanced the idea of serving children in as normal environments as is possible, this is, in the Least Restrictive Environment.

Philosophy of Placement

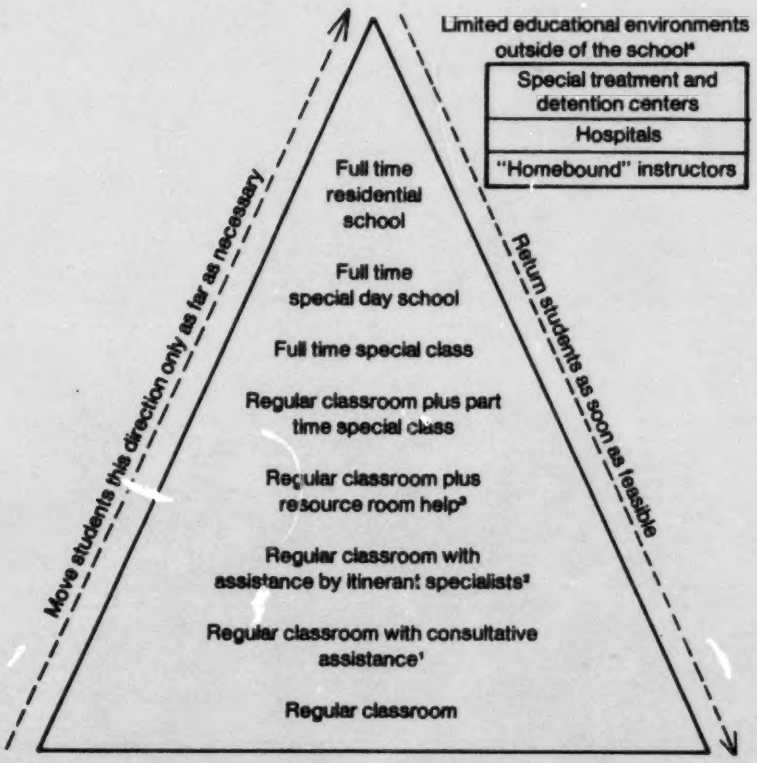
The concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) implies that children should be moved upward, away from the regular classroom base, only as far as necessary for as long as necessary, and they should be returned to that regular classroom setting, which is the natural educational environment for children, as soon as possible.

In order to make the concept of LRE work, the educational system must do two things:

1. Provide options in service delivery (see discussion of cascade).
2. Make the base level, the regular classroom environment, as effective and powerful as possible. By doing so, the level is made capable of dealing with a greater range of individual needs.

The objective of LRE must be viewed as more than just moving students around. If this is all that occurs, we merely are dumping students into the regular classroom. As students move, resources to meet their needs must move with them. For example, when children are moved out of self-contained special classrooms or schools into regular classrooms (the bottom two or three levels of the cascade), special teachers go along with them

Figure 1 The Original Special Education Cascade


Limited educational environments outside of the school[4]
Special treatment and detention centers
Hospitals
"Homebound" instructors
Full time residential school
Full time special day school
Full time special class
Regular classroom plus part time special class
Regular classroom plus resource room help[3]
Regular classroom with assistance by itinerant specialists[2]
Regular classroom with consultative assistance[1]
Regular classroom
Move students this direction only as far as necessary
Return students as soon as feasible

[1] Consultative assistance might be offered, for example, by school psychologists, consulting teachers, resource room teachers, supervisors or others. The term "consultative" denotes only indirect services and no direct service or instruction to the child by the consultant.

[2] Itinerant specialists commonly include speech and hearing clinicians and mobility instructors for the blind, for example. They offer some direct instruction to the students involved.

[3] A Resource Room is a special station (classroom) in a school building which is manned by a Resource Teacher who usually offers some direct instruction to selected students but also usually offers consulting services to regular teachers. Sometimes Resource Teachers are categorical (such as Resource Teacher for the Blind) but increasingly Resource Teachers are employed for a more generic, non-categorical role.

[4] This special set of environments is included here in set-aside fashion because usually students are placed in these settings for reasons other than "educational." For example, they go to detention centers on order of courts for reason of conviction for some criminal offense; or they go to hospitals or are held at home because of health problems. Special educators often work in these limited environments and some degree of specialization in education is required. But, in the main, there is strong preference, from an educational point of view, for return of the students to regular school environments as soon as feasible.

to deliver the same special services in the regular classroom, resource room, or part-time special classroom. We have come to recognize that specialists tend to create environments which only the specialists can manage. By bringing all educational resources to the base of the cascade, we can avoid creating artificial situations and limitations on the chilren we are trying to serve. This movement, which is based on what is best for each child, calls for parents and educators to work together to create new environments in which to serve children. A constant process of rethinking, retraining, and reevaluating is needed.

Rationale for Least Restrictive Environment

Parents and educators must carefully look at their goals and beliefs in the area of LRE. We need a strong rationale for doing what we think is in the best interest of children. Current LRE practices are based on the following rationale:

1. Sending children to special settings for special services frequently limits their environment and negates the responsibility to prepare them for the real world environment which they will eventually face. As an alternative to this separation, we need to create supports in children's lives to prepare them to thrive in the ordinary environment.
2. The awareness and understanding of human differences can be developed by the community. This understanding will result only when nonhandicapped people have significant experiences and interactions with handicapped persons.
3. Providing special services in ordinary settings reduces the stigma of the services. Although we may save a child from stigma now by setting him aside from his nonhandicapped peers, this separation is not an effective long-range strategy. Instead, we must teach all children to accept responsibility, to be helpful to one another, and to work co-operatively. Schools can take the leadership role in this development. By doing so we will set conditions in the schools for kids to be different and still to be accepted.
4. Learning problems can be prevented. If we build the capacity for a greater range of individual differences at the base level - the regular classroom - and if we recognize and meet special needs there, many problems can be avoided before they become severe. We waste our resources and our children's lives if we provide resources only when the problems have become critical.

Considerations in Decision Making

When we try to identify the program that meets an individual child's needs, the following steps are essential:

1. Put instruction first. The purpose of schools is to make an educational difference in the lives of children. By recognizing that children are complex, we can concentrate less on categorizing them and more on identifying and providing the good instructional arrangements they need.
2. Judge each administrative arrangement individually. Don't assume that all services with the same designation are the same. Just as each child is different, so each resource room, part-time class, etc., has its particular strengths and weaknesses. Be open minded toward, yet evaluative of, all the options.
3. Don't consider programs to be static. Observe what is going on and suggest what could be done. Give attention to each situation and look at its potential for development. What could be added to allow a particular option to meet a child's need?
4. Think beyond the school to the home situation. To make education most effective we must develop opportunities to link a child's school experiences to those of home and community. Education must be relevant to these environments, not just to the school's.

Conclusion

When parents and educators plan together, they develop trust in each other. It is valuable and necessary to have the variety of administrative options but it is crucial to develop understanding of one another to make the options work optimally. We need to work creatively and trustingly with one another in the service of all children.

Least Restrictive Environment: Decision Making

HELEN SOBEHART

Mrs. Sobehart, who holds a Masters in Special Education and an Elementary Principal's Certification, has been involved in the field of Special Education since 1969 when she joined the staff of the Learning Disabilities Program of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (A.I.U.). In addition to her teaching responsibilities, she has also worked extensively with regular educators regarding the various outgrowths of Public Law 94-142. As a resource teacher and consultant for North Hills School District and as an Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.) Specialist for the A.I.U., she assisted regular educators in working with handicapped students. In 1979 she became coordinator of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. She is currently Assistant Director of the Western Pennsylvania Special Education Regional Resource Center.

Abstract

The least restrictive environment is the placement that realizes a match between the learning needs of the student and the conditions of the educational environment, while providing the student with appropriate integration with non-handicapped students.

Excerpted from ***Placing Handicapped Students in the Least Restrictive Environment: A Model for Decision Makers. The Pennsylvania Department of Education and the National Learning Resource Center of Pennsylvania, August, 1979.***

The determination of appropriate placements for individual children is a complex process. A valid model for decision making can be invaluable to parents and educators alike.

The Goal

The history and philosophy of special education, along with the mandates of PL 94-142, have developed the concept of Least Restrictive Environment. In order to put this concept into practice, parents and educators must make decisions regarding the variety of service options available to meet a child's needs.

In order to make a competent decision, the needs of a child must be carefully matched to the characteristics of the programs being considered. An objective and systematic process is necessary if this goal is to be met. One model for this decision making process has been developed by the National Learning Resource Center of Pennsylvania. The model presents parents and educators with a method of documenting that they've used an objective process to determine the Least Restrictive Environment. The Department of Education is now requiring I.E.P. teams to provide such documentation when decisions are made.

The Decision Making Process

A variety of student information and program information is necessary in order to determine an appropriate placement.

The Student: Most of the information about the student should be contained in the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.). Some of the areas to consider are:

1. Curriculum. What are the child's annual goals and short term objectives? Both academic areas such as reading and math and developmental areas such as self-help skills should be considered.
2. Media/materials. Is special equipment such as a brailler or hearing aide required?
3. Related Services: Is special transportation necessitated? Are special services such as speech, psychological, physical, or occupational therapy necessary? School health services, social work services, or parent counseling may also be necessary.
4. Learning style. What type of learning environment is needed? Are special grouping arrangements or reinforcement strategies important? The unique ways in which a student learns may create needs that must be met through accommodation in the learning environment.
5. Physical characteristics: Students with physical impairments may need special accomodations in their environment to allow for access and mobility.

The Program: An equal amount of information about each option being considered is required, remembering that no two classes or programs are alike. What is available and what adaptations or modifications can be made in the following areas:

1. Curriculum. This is a critical factor and should be considered heavily. Each placement option will offer a curriculum that contains one or more content areas, geared toward a range of student ability levels. Information should include knowledge of the curriculum that is available and

ways in which modifications could be made.

2. Media/Materials. What media and materials can be delivered to meet a student's needs?
3. Related Services. What services are or could be available?
4. Learning Style. Certain instructional strategies will be utilized in each placement option. What accomodations could be made in the learning environment to meet a student's needs?
5. Physical Environment. What is the status of the current facility and vehicles, and the extent to which they could be modified to meet student needs?
6. Restrictiveness of the Placement Option: information concerning academic and non-academic integration with non-handicapped students.

   Placement options may provide opportunities for integration with non-handicapped students in either or both academic and non-academic settings. The student may have the opportunity to actively engage in learning activities with regular education students; he may participate in non-academic activities, such as meals, recess periods, athletic events, transportation efforts, recreational activities and special interest groups and clubs; or he may be able to interact in both settings.

   Other placement options may not provide opportunities for integration with non-handicapped students. However, these options may be within close physical proximity to regular education classes, thus providing a present educational environment that will allow for the possibility of non-handicapped students interacting with handicapped students.
7. Information Concerning Proximity to the Home.

   In addition to requiring that placement be made on an individual basis, Federal regulations require that a student's placement be geographically as close as possible to his home. Unless implementation of the IEP requires some other arrangement, the student must be educated in the school he would attend if he were not handicapped. Therefore, placement option information should include knowledge of each location.

Once all the student and program information has been gathered, the members of the I.E.P. team can begin to match the needs of the student to the program characteristics. The National Learning Resource Center of Pennsylvania (NLRC/P) has developed several aides to assist in this process. The Placement Option Workshop (See Figure 2) can be used to record the distinctive characteristics of an option which the I.E.P. team is considering. A separate worksheet would be used for each option under consideration.

Subsequently, the Decision Summary Checklist (See Figure 3) can then be used to evaluate each option under consideration.

1. Each placement option being considered is listed under the column, Placement Option.
2. Other learning needs in addition to curriculum, related services, and materials that relate to the student's needs are written in the remaining columns.
3. For each applicable learning need, the team indicates the ability or inability of the option to meet the student's needs: Yes (✓) or No (–). The team should also consider what modifications can be made to allow the option to adapt to the student's needs.
4. The amount of time the student will spend with non-handicapped students in both academic and non-academic settings is indicated.
5. The distance of the placement option from the student's home is indicated.

Thus, by using this process each option is first assessed to determine if it meets the learning needs of the student, as included on the IEP. Each option that meets this criteria, is then assessed to determine which provides the greatest access to non-handicapped students. The option that meets the student's learning needs and provides the greatest access to regular education students should be the student's recommended placement. Hopefully, use of the checklist provides a systematic method for structuring the decision making.

As an example, Figure 4 shows a summary of student and program information. Figure 5 shows the Checklist that the I.E.P. team used to evaluate the options and reach a placement decision.

Conclusion

The definition of appropriate program according to the Pennsylvania Board of Education Regulations, Chapter 13, is:

> *...a program of education and/or training for exceptional school age persons which meets their individual needs as agreed to by a parent, school district, and/or Intermediate Unit.*

There is no magic formula for determining the appropriate program. The best the planning team can do is to carefully look at the child and the options and to systematically arrive at a well documented decision.

PLACEMENT OPTION WORKSHEET

STUDENT: _____ *DATE:* _____

OPTION: _____

1. Describe the extent to which the option meets learning needs listed on the IEP.

   A. Curriculum: _____

   B. Related Services: _____

   C. Special Media and Materials: _____

   D. _____

   E. _____

   F. _____

2. Describe the degree of integration with non-handicapped students provided by this option (academic and/or non-academic settings) and the option's proximity to the student's home.

_____

_____

Figure 2

DECISION SUMMARY CHECKLIST

STUDENT: _____ DATE: _____

PLACEMENT OPTION	LEARNING NEEDS						EDUCATION WITH NON-HANDICAPPED STUDENTS		
	CURRICULUM	RELATED SERVICES	MEDIA & MATERIALS				ACADEMIC	NON-ACADEMIC	PROXIMITY TO HOME
1.									
2.									
3.									
RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT:									

Figure 3

IEP SUMMARY OF STUDENT NEEDS

A. CURRICULUM
   1. Academics
      a. Math - simple computation
      b. Reading - paragraph comprehension
   2. Social/Emotional
      a. Social/Emotional Adjustment - appropriate small group behavior

B. RELATED SERVICES
   1. Counseling/crisis intervention
   2. Bus transportation

C. LEARNING STYLE
   1. One to one interaction - teacher/student
   2. Small group interaction
   3. Behavior management

D. SOCIAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL
   1. Peer behavioral models

PLACEMENT OPTION DESCRIPTION

FOURTH GRADE CLASS WITH RESOURCE ROOM SUPPORT

OPTION 1

curriculum / learning style / curriculum / learning style / learning style / social/psychological / learning style / curriculum / social/psychological / learning style / related services

The fourth grade curriculum covers a wide range of content areas, including reading, mathematics, english science, social studies, spelling, physical education, music, and art. Reading and mathematics instruction is conducted in groups of 10 to 12 students with ability levels ranging from 3.0 to 5.0. The teacher encourages independence of the students in the groups and allows the students to organize projects with minimal teacher assistance. Behavior management systems are not utilized in this environment. The class would provide appropriate role models for Mark.

The resource room program provides individual and small group instruction (4-5 students) in the academic areas of reading and mathematics as well as opportunities for social activities within a structured setting. Students operate under work contracts, with the teacher and aide systematically reinforcing achievement.

The school provides psychological, speech, health and transportation services through the intermediate unit. Crisis intervention service is also available through the school's counselor. The school is located fifteen minutes by bus from Mark's home. He would normally attend this school.

FULL TIME CLASS FOR SOCIALLY/EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED (SED) STUDENTS IN A SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

OPTION 2

curriculum / related services / learning style / learning style / social/psychological / learning style / social/psychological

The curriculum of this class is commensurate with first through fourth grade levels. Instruction is provided in academic and nonacademic areas, including math, reading, spelling, language skills, science, social studies, physical education, music, art, and socialization skills. Psychological counseling, crisis intervention, speech, transportation, and health services are provided. Teacher and aide utilize strategies of positive reinforcement, and feedback of appropriate learning and social behaviors. Techniques of work contracts, one to one instruction, and small work groups provide an opportunity for independence, success, and acceptance with teacher and peer group. The teacher of this class utilizes progression from teacher directed to student directed behavior. Maximum enrollment in this classroom is twelve students to a teacher and an aide. Integration with peers from the regular classroom is provided through activities such as; music, art, physical education, lunch, and transportation to and from school. This facility is located within a thirty minute bus ride of Mark's home.

INTERMEDIATE UNIT SED CLASS IN A SPECIAL FACILITY

OPTION 3

curriculum / related services / media/materials / learning style / social/psychological / learning style

Curriculum is designed to provide instruction at the first through fourth grade level. Academic and nonacademic areas include math, language, reading, social studies, science, spelling, socialization, self-help, music, art, and physical education. Psychological, speech, hearing, transportation, and health services are provided in this program. In addition to adaptations in materials for educational levels, some materials are specifically designed to meet self-concept and social needs. Behavior management is utilized in an effort to encourage the student to progress from teacher directed behaviors to self-directing his behavior, independently and appropriately. Small group and one to one instructional settings are utilized. Pupil/teacher ratio is 12 students to one teacher and two aides. The program is segregated from regular school settings. It is located twenty minutes by bus from Mark's home.

Figure 4

DECISION SUMMARY CHECKLIST

STUDENT: Mark Hughes DATE: September 6, 1979

PLACEMENT OPTION	LEARNING NEEDS						EDUCATION WITH NON-HANDICAPPED STUDENTS		
	CURRICULUM	RELATED SERVICES	MEDIA & MATERIALS	Learning Style	Social Psy.		ACADEMIC	NON-ACADEMIC	PROXIMITY TO HOME
1. Fourth Grade/ Resource Room- neighborhood school	✓	✓		✓	✓		60%	100%	15 min. by bus
2. SED Class- Elementary School	✓	✓		✓	✓		0%	100%	30 min. by bus
3. I.U. SED Class- Special Facility	✓	✓		✓	-role models				

RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENT: Fourth Grade/Resource Room - neighborhood school.

Figure 5

Communication and Conferencing Skills for Parents

JOAN P. LANZ

Joan Lanz is the Consultation and Education Specialist for South Hills Child Guidance Center in Pittsburgh. A graduate of Duquesne University, she earned her B.S. in Education and her M.Ed. in Guidance and Counseling. Her experiences include nine years as a classroom teacher and eight years at South Hills Child Guidance Center. Her principal duties at the Center are the education of and consultation with significant others in the lives of children.

Abstract

As parents and educators attempt to plan together for the needs of children, communication becomes a key issue. An understanding of the communication process can enhance conferencing efforts.

The Communication Process

Communication is the process whereby two people fulfill their need for transmitting information. Because language is a code, the sender in the communication process must first put his message in a word code. The receiver of the message is then faced with two responsibilities: he must decode the message and then feed it back to the sender. It is important to feed back the message heard regularly so that misunderstanding does not occur.

Factors Effecting Communication

A number of factors impact on our communication and it is important to be aware of those factors and the effect that they have. The first factor is assumptions. Assumptions are based on past experiences and parents working with educators must be cautious not to make assumptions. One must listen to every word that is said and operate only on the words one hears and the non-verbal communication one sees at that very time. Parents should call others to a sense of responsibility for what they say. They must, in turn, be responsible for feeding back to educators their understanding of the message being conveyed.

Another effect on communication is participants' tolerance levels. Our tolerance level affects the way we react to messages at specific times. With some sensitivity to our own rythyms we will know our good times for communication as well as our not so good times. Scheduling a conference when tolerance levels are high is a control device that ensures good communication between parents and educators.

The number of participants at the conference is a third factor impacting on communication. A parent may feel overwhelmed or intimidated by the level or amount of "professionalism" at a conference. Although this may be a natural reaction, parents must recognize that they are the most important persons at the conference for they are the only ones who truly cannot be replaced. Experience has shown that parents are the most reliable observers and predictors of their child's behavior. If parents are aware of their importance and feel good about their role, their communication will be more effective.

A fourth factor parents frequently face is the use of educational jargon. While educators must be held accountable for using language which is understandable by all involved, they usually want to do that, and parents need only interrupt a discussion whenever there is doubt or need for clarification of the terms being used. Interrupting a discussion for this reason saves time in the long run and makes a conference flow more smoothly.

A final factor which can impact on the conference is non-verbal communication. Parents need to be sensitive to behaviors such as facial expressions, posture, glances and gestures; information can be gained this way which makes information being shared much more understandable.

Preparation for the Conference

In preparing for a conference, a parent must know the mechanics: when and where the conference will be held, who is going to be there, and what is going to be discussed. A parent has a right and an obligation to come prepared.

The WHERE is very interesting to note because the conference always seems to take place on the "educator's turf". A neutral ground may be important and a parent should be willing to inquire about the possibility of a meeting some place that is comfortable for him as well as the educator.

The WHO should also be considered carefully. If a parent has a personality conflict with a certain educator that is to be present at a conference, it is okay for a parent to at least ask if the school can be represented by someone else.

Finally, the purpose of the conference should be carefully studied. Parents should attempt to think out their goals for the planned meeting and to make a list of information they would like to contribute to the discussion. This type of forethought can save much time at the actual meeting and help keep the discussion on track.

Participation

With the proper preparation, the conference can be a very productive experience. All of the previously discussed communication factors should be considered. Upon entering a conference room, it is helpful if the parent can position himself so that he can face everyone in attendance. This allows one to be alert to the affect of each person as the conference progresses and to recognize the non-verbal communication.

Using prepared notes, parents should make a conscious effort to keep the discussion directed toward the conference goal. Equally, educators in attendance should not be allowed to "derail" the discussion. In addition to using prepared notes, additional notes should be taken as the conference proceeds. This will help with future recall and sharing the conference with other family members.

As a participating member, a parent should not let anything that is not understood pass. Ask as many questions as necessary to satisfy oneself.

Ask for clarification. Throughout, questions and responses should be phrased tactfully and in a positive manner. This will ensure a positive attitude and maintain high tolerance levels.

Finally, parents must try to maintain an open attitude to the options presented. Avoid making generalizations and assumptions. Parents should focus on what the program presented will mean for their child, and avoid closing off possibilities before they are fully explored.

In concluding a conference, consensus should be reached. Parents, as part of the educational planning team, must be part of that consensus. Consensus is not taking a vote. Rather, it is the adoption of a decision which all involved feel will meet the child's needs under certain defined circumstances. Many times this consensus involves give and take and as each participant agrees, the decision emerges. Without consensus, a conference should not end or it should be continued at some future time.

Conclusion

As parents attempt to work together with educators, they should remember that they are the most important person at their child's conference. They should attempt to be prepared and active participants at all conferences involving their child and, if possible, encourage meeting with educators at their home as it can be a positive and enlightening experience.

Parents and educators can and must work together toward the end of appropriate placements for children. If they are both alert to the communication process and to their area of responsibility, the conference will go smoothly and quickly, and children can only profit from that type of interaction.

A Regular Class with Supportive Services

Abstract

Many handicapped students are able to spend most of their educational day in a regular classroom, receiving only minimum special education services. These services can be given directly to the students or indirectly in the form of assistance and support to regular education teachers.

Anita M. Diamond
Liaison Counselor
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Theresa M. Lach
Learning Disabilities Resource Teacher
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Theresa E. Laurie, Ph. D.
Moderator
Child Development Unit of Children's Hospital
Medical School, University of Pittsburgh

Types of Services

In the past, services to special students were provided in a special setting. If a child needed support in an academic area, for instance, he/she was pulled out of the regular classroom, given that support, and sometimes returned. This process seldom, if ever, included helping the regular classroom teacher to understand the newly integrated child's needs or assist in meeting them.

Recently, the importance of serving mainstream students in a more complete, comprehensive, and effective way has been clarified. While we have developed the skill to meet the academic needs of these students in structured ways, other needs still exist. We need to work toward meeting the social-emotional needs of the students as they spend most of their educational time in the regular environment. We also need to put a heavy emphasis on the needs of the regular educator. If he/she is to meet the existing demands, then we need to provide the necessary assistance. In essence, the special and regular educators must work to support each other in order to support their students.

Direct

The special education system is most familiar with providing direct services to children. While this type of service is certainly important, its effectiveness can be greatly enhanced if communication regarding it is continually provided to regular education teachers.

For example, direct services are most frequently provided by someone such as an itinerant or resource teacher. One function this individual provides is evaluation of the special student. Much information is gained through this process. It should be a further responsibility of the specialist to communicate his/her findings to others who have direct contact with the student.

Another direct service which is commonly provided is instructional support. A student may receive all of his instruction in a particular subject from a special teacher or receive back up (review and reinforcement) work for a mainstream subject. Again, to make this service most effective it must be closely coordinated to what occurs in the mainstream. The special teacher needs to be constantly aware of the demands the child meets in the regular class. This knowledge can be gained via informal meetings with the teacher and talking about those demands with the student. Instruction by the specialist can then be more realistically geared toward the same goals and demands that the student will face in the regular environment.

Finally, direct service must address the social-emotional needs of the student. Special students who were previously taught exclusively in a special classroom may have difficulty adapting to the social behavior expected in the mainstream. Similarly, students who have experienced failure previously may have intense emotional needs during the reintegration process. Special teachers can help these students deal with their feelings and problems through periodic meetings to discuss coping skills, feelings, and appropriate behaviors.

Indirect

While direct service to the student is important, it is just as important for the special educator to provide services to the regular classroom teacher.

The regular educator needs support to develop the necessary confidence to work with a handicapped student. Although this assistance can sometimes be supplied through formal inservice or coursework, the unique needs of a teacher can best be addressed by someone who is familiar with the

handicapped students. The special education teacher in that building can fill that role. The specialist can help the regular teacher understand his students and develop ways to make the special student successful in this environment. The specialist can provide feedback to the teacher on what effect instruction is having. As a result, the special student can learn to be successful in the class and the mainstream teacher can learn to diversify his/her methods and expectations to accomodate a wider range of students.

Another important aspect of indirect service is the coordination and monitoring of a handicapped student's program. Because each child is unique, a variety of supports may be required. Someone must be responsible for assuring that communication between all the various parties is ongoing and to assure that good decisions are made. Without such coordination and communication a fragmented program may be provided and particular needs may go unmet.

Personnel

It is clear that for handicapped students in the mainstream, no one type of service can completely meet all needs. While individualized direct instruction from a specialist may meet some, additional direct and indirect services may be needed to insure a student's success in the regular classroom.

In any school system there are a variety of personnel who can serve in these roles. Certainly an itinerant or resource room teacher can instruct a special student. If, however, they are also to serve in the equally important role of a consultant to the regular educator, then that must be planned for. Administrators must foster that role by providing "released time" for the formal and informal meetings which are paramount and support ongoing communication and coordination of services.

In school systems where an itinerant or resource teacher is not available or needed, the indirect support to the teacher must still be carefully planned. Special counselors, liaison counselors, psychologists, and other professionals have the necessary expertise to serve in a consultative role. If this is to occur, however, it must be clearly specified and monitored.

This is where the role of parents is vital. If their children are to thrive and benefit from education in the mainstream both the direct and indirect services must be provided as needed. Parents should work toward a clear understanding of their child's needs and the needs of their child's mainstream teacher and assure that the educational program addresses both.

Conclusion

Educating students in the mainstream has presented new challenges to both regular and special educators. It is clear that both systems can and must support one another. If this partnership occurs, all students are the beneficiaries.

Parents must be cognizant of this fact and recognize that their support of services to teachers is in fact a necessary ingredient for appropriate services to their mainstreamed children.

A Part-Time Special Class in a Regular School

Abstract

One form of special programming to meet the needs of handicapped students is the part-time class. By definition, a part-time class is one in which students spend 50 to 85% of their day with the special teacher and the remaining percentage in the regular classroom with their non-handicapped peers.

Abe J. Comunale
Elementary Principal
Ingomar Elementary School
North Allegheny School District

Deborah L. Eck
Learning Disabilities Teacher

Jan Ernandez
Learning Disabilities Teacher

Barbara L. Santho
Educable Mentally Retarded Teacher

Pat McClinchie
Parent of a Learning Disabled Child

Mary S. Sciulli
Moderator
Duquesne University

The Special Program

Generally, students in this placement option receive all or most of their academic training in the special class. For instance, at Ingomar Elementary School there are two classes for Learning Disabled students and one for Educable Mentally Retarded students. Teachers in these classes instruct or provide reinforcement to students in any or all of the following areas: reading, spelling, language arts, math, science, health, and social studies, according to a child's I.E.P. Students are individually assessed for their skills in these areas and taught on a one to one basis or through small group instruction in the special class.

In addition to instruction from the special teacher, support services are also provided from individuals such as social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists. All of these services are intended to meet the special needs of the child.

Integration Policy

Integration is based on the belief that as human beings we are more alike than we are different. Special students are approached on an individual basis, but with the goal of treating them like everyone else. All students at Ingomar, for example, are assigned to a regular home room and participate in regular education gym, art and music classes, as well as school assemblies, field trips, and other special events or activities. Integration into academic areas is also possible and is determined on an individual basis at the I.E.P. Conference.

The Special Teacher's Role

All special classes should be success oriented. Children who are placed in these programs have generally experienced failures in school and in the community. It is the responsibility of the special teacher to try to foster the child's self confidence in both the special and regular classroom by providing effective instructional experiences.

Working closely with the regular classroom teachers and other staff members is a necessity. The special teacher meets regularly with the regular teacher to discuss the needs of the child. She can suggest accomodations which can be made, as well as develop back up services which she herself can provide to make the integrated experience a successful one.

The Regular Teacher's Role

Everyone has a different learning style and learning needs. It is the responsibility of the regular class teacher to be aware of the differences in her students and to design instruction to meet those differences. In consultation with the special teacher, necessary accomodations are discussed and implemented. One child may need to have visual stimuli limited. The use of study carrols or seating this student near the front of the classroom may meet this need. Other students may require near point copying versus copying from a board, or may need to take tests orally. With proper consultation with the special teacher, these needs can be identified and met.

Making It Work

There are many reasons for the success that Ingomar Elementary has experienced in their integration of learning disabled and mentally

retarded students.

Communication is a vital factor. At all levels, both formally and informally, the communication process is emphasized. Starting with the students, a buddy system is established whereby a special child is paired with one of his homeroom classmates. This pairing encourages ongoing communication and hopefully a growing understanding of one another. Teachers too communicate regularly and the open door policy of the administration encourages continual sharing of information. Given this process, problems are discussed immediately before they become major.

Cooperation seems to be the other key. The staff at Ingomar pulls together to make it work for children. The philosophy is "whatever it takes to get the job done."

Finally, the role of the family is viewed as a significant one and parent involvement is encouraged. In the opinion of many parents at Ingomar, the school is an exceptional one. But they point out that there is no reason why all schools can not be exceptional. Parents must not stop when they see what is but rather go on to suggest what could and should be. Parents should encourage school systems to be flexible. Children change daily and programs must also change to meet new needs. Finally, parent organizations in the regular school are encouraged to recognize and value the opportunities for growth that their non-handicapped children will experience from their interactions with the special children. Common sense and a humanitarian attitude will add depth and success to any program.

Conclusion

Ingomar Elementary is just one of many schools that has clearly demonstrated that the part-time special class is a viable method of meeting the needs of handicapped children. This school has successfully integrated their special children. They have fostered acceptance and understanding while continuing to provide sound effective instruction for their students.

Q: Most regular educators feel they don't have the skills to work with special children. Who initiates retraining efforts?

A: Teachers should initiate their own retraining, as well as requests from the administration. Administrators do however have the ultimate responsibility for fostering the professional growth of their staff.

Q: What can a parent do when a teacher refuses to make accomodations for a child?

A: This refusal reflects on the teacher's ability to work with all children. If a principal is not concerned over this situation, he should be. Special teachers can be of assistance in resolving the situation by offering to work with the regular teacher. If the teacher continues to refuse, parents should go through the channels of the building and district administration and even the school board if necessary.

Q: How can parents help administrators effect change?

A: Administrators must be open with parents and indicate to them when they have a need for parental support. Teachers should also be willing to talk openly. Parents can frequently bring about changes that educators working alone can not.

On the other hand, the entire burden can not be thrown to the parents. Educators must also be willing to speak out on behalf of children and their families. It must be a joint effort if it is to be a successful one.

A Full-Time Special Class in a Regular School

Abstract

A full-time special class is one in which students are generally expected to spend 85% or more of their time with the special education teacher. The remaining time is spent in integrated activities such as art, music, physical education, industrial arts, and home economics.

Dawne W. Blazevich
Southmoreland Elementary Principal
Ruffsdale Elementary School

Jacqueline R. Marchewka
Parent

Susan McCartney
Parent

Brenda J. McCloskey
Special Education Teacher
Trainable Mentally Retarded

Julie Vickers
Special Education Teacher
Trainable Mentally Retarded

Helen Sobehart
Moderator
Coordinator of Personnel Development
Allegheny Intermediate Unit

Preparation to Begin

Any time students, special or regular, are introduced to a new environment proper preparation is a necessity. Ruffsdale Elementary School experienced the need for such preparation last fall when two classes for trainable mentally retarded children were moved from a special education center to the community elementary school.

Frequently, much of the preparation focuses on addressing the fears of the unknown. Teachers, parents, and students were all faced with the prospect of a totally new experience. Parents of the handicapped were worried that their children would be made fun of and not accepted. Parents of the non-handicapped were apprehensive that the special students would disrupt classes and cause their children's needs to be neglected. The staff at Ruffsdale seemed to find that open communication was the answer. By asking all involved exactly what their fears or concerns were, accurate information could be supplied. It was admitted that all the answers were not available but that the staff was committed to working together.

A parent who had wanted this less restrictive placement for her child, as well as one who had opposed the movement, expressed that attitudes are the key. Both children experienced successful transitions into the integrated environment which they attributed to an open attitude. Success can be fostered by recognizing that despite the inevitable problems, integration is in the best interest of the children.

Working Together

From the beginning, it is important that all of the children are viewed as the responsibility of all school personnel. There can be no division of "your kids and my kids". Although a teacher may have the primary responsibility for certain areas of instruction, it must be recognized that a team approach is most effective.

Due to human differences however, one can not expect the same degree of cooperation to be exhibited at all times between all individuals. Sometimes when resistance to working together is encountered, the special teacher can impact on the situation. Through persistance and a real extention of oneself in terms of offering help and understanding, the working relationship can begin to form.

It must also be noted that although a positive attitude is a pre-requisite, in order to experience continued success a real effort must be exerted. It takes true dedication to extend oneself to meet the needs of all students. If an educator views teaching as "a job", that effort will not be there. Generally, such a person will have difficulty meeting the needs of non-handicapped students, let alone those of a handicapped child.

In the Special Class

It should be remembered that in this option, students spend at least 85% of their school day in a special class. The special teachers noted that the change from a special center to a regular education setting has had an effect on how they view this time.

By being in the more normative environment, their expectations for their children have been influenced. That is, they are able to view the goals they set for their students in relationship to the "regular environment." It helps one to realize what skills are important not only academically but socially as well.

The teachers try to bring the normalization of the regular environment into their classes as much as possible. Regular education students frequently participate in the special class as tutors for a child, to direct a special project, or just to share some time. These students take their responsibilities very seriously as they work with a special child who has a need they can help with.

In The Regular Class

Although virtually all academic instruction occurs within the special education setting, there are still many regular education areas a handicapped child can participate in. At Ruffsdale, all children have the opportunity to attend physical education, art, library, and/or music classes.

In order to make this inclusion a meaningful experience, the cooperative effort is a neccesity. On a student level, special friends can be assigned to assist in the formation of relationships or for instructional help. At the teacher level, the regular and special teacher must work closely. By sharing information about the child, evaluating an activity in terms of the child's ability to participate in it, and problem solving, the experience can be a successful one. Flexibility is also important. At Ruffsdale, special teachers or their aides can accompany students to the regular class. This enables a wider range of academic, social, or physical needs to be met in the regular classroom. In addition, communication and understanding between both regular and special personnel is ensured.

In the School

By virtue of their class being located in a regular education building, integrative experiences are possible for all children. At Ruffsdale, for example, all of the students have recess, eat lunch, and go to special assemblies, and on field trips with non-handicapped children. By virtue of location, these possibilities are created. Thus, for all students, the social contact with non-handicapped students in a neighborhood school is possible and occurs on a daily basis.

It was emphasized that this type of integration is easiest at an early age. At a primary level, students will learn to expect the handicapped to be among them. Thus, as the children grow up together, their differences, which become more acute with age, may not be so noticeable or important. Integrating an older child into a setting in which he is not known, may cause his differences to be more outstanding.

Conclusion

By looking at Ruffsdale Elementary School, it can be seen that even for students needing a full-time special class, the experience of having that class located in a regular education building can be beneficial.

Most importantly, each child must be treated as an individual. Parents must avoid accepting placements based only on a label. Just because a child is labeled mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed, for example, does not necessarily mean that a segregated setting is necessary. A child can get the same education, not sacrificing quality services, and experience that education in an integrated, normalized school setting.

Q: How can all the services that are provided in a special center, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, or counseling be provided in a regular school?

A: The provision of these services is merely an administrative arrangement. While a Physical Therapist may be assigned to a special center on a full time basis, she serves all the children needing PT in that facility. This same PT could serve special students in several regular schools on an itinerant basis, coming to the schools weekly as needed. The child would get the same quantity (time) and quality of services. How and where that specialist is used is simply an administrative decision. Parents should never accept a statement that a child cannot receive the same services in a less restrictive environment without a thorough investigation.

A Special Class in a Special School

Abstract

Special classes in public or private special schools are, according to the cascade of educational services, considered most restrictive. Generally, such options provide minimum opportunity for integration.

William R. Bauer, Director of Education
Home for Crippled Children

Gary L. Holman, Ph. D, Academic Principal
Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

James L. McKenna, Principal, Pioneer Center
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Eileen Woodside, Principal, Howard Street School
Allegheny Intermediate Unit

N. Karen Kelly, Parent, Moderator
President, Association for Retarded Citizens
Allegheny County

The Special Education Center

Within the public school system, there are schools which serve only handicapped students on a full-time, day basis. These schools are frequently referred to as Special Centers.

In some areas, these centers provide all the educational services to students of various disabilities from ages 4.7 to 21. An example of this option is the special center programs operated by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. Throughout the 46 school districts in Allegheny county (excluding the City of Pittsburgh) children identified as mentally retarded (educable, trainable, severe, and profound), physically handicapped, or emotionally disturbed generally receive all their educational programming in one of seven special centers. Each center provides a full range of services and tries to meet all of the educational, social, and vocational needs within the confines of the center.

The special center provided by the public system frequently provides a wider array of support services than are typically found in the regular schools. The special center can, if it chooses, foster the goals of least restrictive environment. For example, the basic goals of Pioneer Center, a public school center operated by the City of Pittsburgh for the physically handicapped, are:

1. Promoting independence.
2. Providing appropriate instructional programing for each child.
3. Returning the student to a less restrictive educational program as soon as possible.
4. Preparing the student to enter the world of work and community living.

These goals are accomplished via continuous assessment of a child's readiness to move out. The team approach is emphasized where home and school work together to determine the needs of the child. If the I.E.P. indicates it, a child may go out of the center to a regular school for part time integration in areas such as vocational training. The purpose is to recognize the fact that the special child is more like his non-handicapped peers than unlike them and to prepare the child for eventual integration into his community.

The Special Day School: the Approved Private School

Approved private schools are intended to serve the most severely involved students. School districts place their students there when they do not have a public school program to meet the needs of the child. The local district provides 20% of the funding and the state pays for 80% of the placement costs. The Home for Crippled Children is an example of this type of placement option.

Because this option is viewed as one of the most restrictive, one must carefully look at its intended purpose.

The National Consortium for Child Mental Health Services adopted the following position in December, 1979:

> *We support (least restrictive environment) in so far as it leads to better services. The term should not be generalized to mean that all children are better off in the public schools. Some handicapped children in certain stages of their development function better in a structured setting.*

The role of the approved private school is to provide intensity of services. That intensity should be a major consideration in making a decision on this placement option. The amount and frequency of the support therapies is generally greater than in the public schools. This is a result of the greater

drawing power that private schools have by virtue of the fact that they are frequently located next to hospitals, rehabilitation centers, psychiatric therapy centers, etc. While public schools can duplicate this intensity of service provision, few do.

It should be realized that many private schools have a goal of being short term. In relationship to the triangular cascade of services, they have a goal of following the arrow down to the base of the school system, and returning students to less restrictive settings as soon as possible. It is frequently demonstrated that a period of short term intensive work can be very beneficial to a child. When the public and private sector work closely and co-operatively, the private schools can play an important role in short term services to prepare students for less restrictive settings.

The Residential School

Each state has a number of state approved private schools which are intended to serve children with a low-incident handicap on a residential basis. The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf is an example of a private residential and day facility. W.P.S.D. is intended for students with severe needs. Approximately 80% of the students receiving services there have hearing losses of 80 decibels or greater which affects their processing of linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification. The majority of these students were born deaf and thus have profound language deficits as well.

Deafness requires intensive, ongoing educational treatment. Any programming should have continuity of teaching methods and curriculum. At W.P.S.D. this continuity is provided via services for children of all ages. A home program is provided to parents as soon as a child has been diagnosed as having a severe or profound hearing loss.

A nursery program, elementary and secondary program continue the intensive services that a student may need. It is important to note that the formal instruction a child receives during the traditional 5 hours a day, 180 days a year program constitutes only 10% of a student's time. The other 90% is spent in experiences outside of the formal classroom. Part of the function of a residential program is to provide an extension of the learning day beyond the formal school program.

At W.P.S.D., for example, a wide variety of after school programming occurs. Speech and language labs, clubs, social activities, and instruction in crafts and hobbies are all available. The intent is to provide further training in basic skills such as self help and leisure time activities in preparation for adult living.

It should be noted that while the public school may be able to parallel the formal intensive program, it generally is not able to extend the learning day into after school programming to the extent that a residential school can.

Conclusion

All of the options presented in this session are considered to be most restrictive in terms of the cascade of services. These placement options serve very specific roles in providing intensive, short or long term services to severely handicapped students.

It should be remembered however that all programs having the same designation, i.e. special center or residential school, are not all the same. Parents should look carefully at each placement that is recommended and determine what the goals and services of that program are. A restrictive setting can, if desired, still allow integrated opportunities for its students and prepare those students in very carefully planned ways to eventually move to more integrated, less restrictive settings, as their needs allow.

Questions and Answers

Q: How is it determined that a child needs a residential placement in an approved private school?

A: Generally, residential placements are the result of either an intense need such as a medical, psychological, or educational problem requiring consistency and intensity in excess of the regular school day or when the distance between the child's home and the school is too great for daily travel.

Q: Do the special centers provide any activities with the non-handicapped?

A: A center can provide partial mainstreaming for its students. The degree and type should depend on the specific needs of the child. Sending a child to a regular school for part of the day can help prepare him for eventual return. For example, W.P.S.D. sends some of their students along with a special teacher to a neighborhood school. There, the special teacher works with the regular teacher and students to help integrate the deaf students.

Seven Big Ideas About Mainstreaming in U.S. Public Schools

JACK W. BIRCH, Ph. D.
MAYNARD C. REYNOLDS, Ph. D.

Jack W. Birch is Professor of Special Education and Educational Psychology in the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. He began as a teacher of special children in 1937 and has since worked as a teacher of exceptional children and a school psychologist. He was Director of Special Education and of the Psychoeducational Clinic in the Pittsburgh Public Schools from 1948 to 1958. Dr. Birch is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Association on Mental Deficiency, and a Diplomate of the American Psychological Association. He was President of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1960-1961. He is responsible for over 100 publications dealing with the education and rehabilitation of exceptional children and adults. Some special honors include an Award of Merit (1955) by a Pittsburgh parents' association in recognition of outstanding service to the mentally retarded and a similar award in 1976 from the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Maynard C. Reynolds is a Professor in the Department of Psychoeducational Studies at the University of Minnesota and the Director of the National Support Systems Project, an organization funded by the Office of Special Education, U. S. Department of Education. The National Support Systems Project provides technical assistance to almost 100 colleges or departments of education which hold Deans' Grants (awarded by the Office of Special Education) for the purpose of up-dating teacher education programs. Dr. Reynolds is widely known for his activities in behalf of handicapped children and youth. He is the author and/or editor of many publications.

Abstract

Throughout this country, mainstreaming and least restrictive environment are growing concepts in the education of exceptional children. There are several basic policies upon which the movement to educate handicapped children in more integrated settings was based. An awareness and understanding of these policies should assist parents and educators in forming more accurate opinions about the movement and in putting the policies to work through practices that benefit all children, exceptional and otherwise.

Public Policies

1. *Mainstreaming is part of an international change toward loftier social values. Nationally, the change in public policy extends far beyond education, into all sectors of American society. This mainstreaming movement has called upon the eductional system specifically to create the power to deal with exceptionality.* We must work very rapidly to develop this expertise, otherwise the movement of children, youth, and adults will be greater than our development of services to meet their needs. If we keep this movement in perspective, however, and work together for what is best for everyone, we can bring this new public policy into focus and feel good about being a part of it.
2. *The mainstreaming movement is based on a conglomeration of state and federal laws, constitutional provisions, and court decisions.* When such a profound and sweeping policy change occurs, a wave-like movement is felt as systems attempt to meet the new legislative and judicial requirements. Passing legislation and issuing court orders, however, doesn't solve all the problems. Much clarification is needed to make the changes effective. Thus, we have to keep in balance our developmental efforts and our compliance efforts. The educational system must avoid looking at new laws and judicial interpretations only from the perspective of regulation: forms to be filled out, reports to be submitted, etc. Instead, we must recognize and put our efforts into the opportunities these regulations create for development. How can we retrain and reorganize our system to meet the demand to really integrate all children, including those who are not in or are only partly in the system? If we do not put intensive efforts into these developmental areas we will again be faced with more regulations which will tell us just how that must be done. Proper initiative and development of services by the educational system can prevent the need for further legislation in this area.
3. *States differ significantly in their educational policies; each state, for education, is like an individual nation.* States and local units need to join together to bridge gaps so that the differences in educational programs are not so great from area to area. There should not be fundamental differences between what constitutes an appropriate program from one state to another. We must think cooperatively as

we put our efforts into the developmental areas. Parents and advocacy agencies have strong national networks and are thus in a prime position to help states communicate and learn from one another. We need a national effort if this movement is to be successful, an effort that respects and builds on local and state initiative.

4. *The mainstreaming movement calls for a deliberate merger of special and regular education systems.* This merger necessitates some significant role changes for all professionals: teachers, administrators, psychologists, supervisors, counselors and the rest. In the past, professionals were trained to work alone. Careful research, however, has shown that we do a better job of educating when we diversify staffing and teaming of professionals. We can clearly do many jobs together that we can't do alone. Thus, as we attempt to improve the education of all children, we must consider retraining professionals toward joint efforts.

   In addition to role changes, organizational changes are equally crucial. We must look at the type of services exceptional children need and develop organizational methods to deliver those services in a variety of school settings.

5. *The mainstreaming movement has a long and successful history.* Contrary to popular opinion, integrating exceptional children is not a new idea. It was in full operation in several school systems years before it was required by law. There is much hard experience which we can study and benefit from. Since the early 1940s, various educational systems have effectively educated almost every kind of exceptional child in minimally restrictive settings. We need to disseminate the knowledge they've developed and utilize it.

6. *Mainstreaming is made up of two components: temporary (bring them back) and long term (never let them get away).* For some years to come, we have the temporary problem of bringing back to less restrictive settings children who were unnecessarily segregated. We must be especially appreciative and respectful of the families of these children who have had histories of difficulty in obtaining appropriate educational services. We must recognize that we may have limited success with bringing these children back. The most successful mainstreaming efforts begin early and are long term. We should concentrate on the new wave of children who always have been in the mainstream, and develop services to continually meet their needs as they move through the school system.

7. *Despite the vast numbers of parents and educators who are devoting their energies to this movement, it will probably take another decade before the major implementation problems are resolved.* We can hope and work for more rapid growth, but it always takes time to do things correctly. We must expect some backward steps among the forward ones. Improved services to children in less restrictive settings is a sound and achievable goal for the future. How near or far away that future is depends on our wisdom and our striving. Parents should continue to play major roles in working with educators. The monitoring of the services delivered to children should be a joint effort of parents, educators, and the community at large.

Conclusion

In complying with new public policy, we are faced with the immediate task of developing effective programs. We also have many long-range tasks, such as reworking our teacher-training programs and developing more effective educational services.

Many forces will influence this major reformation of how we work with exceptional individuals in the schools and in the community. The interest of parents, minority groups, special and regular educators, and others will further this transformation.

We should be especially alert to the interests of the parents of regular education students. Their opinions will play a critical role in determining the future. Will this group see our efforts to serve exceptional children in a more integrated and complete way as a subtraction from their own child's services, or will they see this as an opportunity, at a very deep level, to understand their own children as individuals and to have them served in better, more adequate ways as well?

We must communicate clearly that our efforts to better serve those students with special needs are also efforts to better serve all children. If the parents of all children are not with us in this movement, all we hope for and dream about may be lost.

Changes in Teacher Education: A Positive Response to Public Law 94-142

CONSTANCE L. HUNTER

Constance Hunter is an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the School of Education at Duquesne University. She has written and coordinated federal grants from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and the U. S. Office of Eduction. She is presently Director of a Dean's Grant, from the Office of Special Education: Mainstream Project T.E.A.C.H. (Training Educators to Assist Children with Handicaps).

Abstract

Since the enactment of Public Law 94-142, there has been a positive movement in teacher training programs at national, state, and local levels. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has mandated the 87 certifying colleges and universities in the Commonwealth to include competencies within their programs so that all educators will be able to work effectively with handicapped students in the least restrictive environment.

The Need

In 1975, P. L. 94-142 was signed into effect to assure that all handicapped children have available to them a free appropriate public education. One of the significant mandates of the law is that this equal educational opportunity be provided in the least restrictive environment. Therefore in order to be in compliance, educators must assure that handicapped children are placed in an integrated educational setting in which to the maximum extent appropriate, they are educated with children who are not handicapped.

Given the mandates of 94-142 and selected Pennsylvania laws, new requirements have been created which must be addressed by teachers in the regular classroom.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has recognized that professional development must be undertaken by all educators in order to effectively meet the educational needs of all students. Current and prospective educators must be provided with the opportunity to master new skills which they will need in order to work with handicapped children in the regular classroom and within the school as a whole.

The Response

The educational system has attempted to meet this demand in various ways. First, in 1975 the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped designated funds called Deans' Grants to universities for the purpose of re-evaluating teacher training programs. As a result of this effort, many universities are now developing more effective comprehensive programs to train the regular educator.

In addition, in 1979 the Pennsylvania Department of Education set forth a goal to develop guidelines which educational systems across the state could use to give direction to their preservice (educational training programs) and inservice (training for practicing educators) programs.

Eight consultants and a special task force were appointed to develop the guidelines. Parents, educators, and community representatives worked intensively to generate a list of competencies which are needed by educators to effectively work with children who have handicaps.

The Ten Competencies

The following competencies were defined for use as guidelines in the preparation of all professional educators in Pennsylvania.

The Educator:

1. *Understands the legal basis for educating students in the least restrictive environment.*
2. *Understands the implications which handicapping conditions have for the learning process.*
3. *Recognizes students who may be in need of special services.*
4. *Uses appropriate resources and support services.* Educators must know the roles of support personnel, including community resources for children and their families, and ways to access these services.
5. *Confers with and reports to parents on educational programs for students with handicaps.* This includes the ability to encourage positive relationships with parents in order to establish rapport and mutual understanding.
6. *Facilitates the social acceptance of persons with handicaps by encouraging positive interpersonal relationships.* This includes identifying existing attitudes, including one's own, toward persons with handicaps. Based on this information, the educator must be able to establish a positive learning environment and develop relationships for successful social and intellectual interactions.
7. *Uses individual, group, and classroom management techniques for effective accomodation of students with handicaps.*

8. *Assesses the educational needs of students with handicaps.* This includes assessing the instructional demands being placed on a student and determining the extent to which the student is able to meet those demands.
9. *Modifies instructional strategies to provide for the individual needs of students with handicaps.*
10. *Evaluates the classroom progress of students with handicaps.*

The Result

Through mastery of these competencies, educators will be better prepared to provide educational services not only to students with handicaps but to all students.

The higher education system is involved in a continuous process of analyzing their course offerings to determine the extent to which they are developing these competencies (skills) in their students. The intent is not to tack on a few "special education" offerings to the current program but to revise the total curriculum to foster the ongoing development of these skills.

Local intermediate units and school districts are also working in this vein through development of quality inservice instruction. Hopefully, through the generalized acceptance and implementation of these guidelines, cooperation between the colleges and universities and the local education agencies will continue and be strengthened. With both entities working together, as they did in the development of the guidelines, the preparation of competent teachers who are more effective in less restrictive environments will be possible.

Conclusion

Although the task of training all educators to work with all children is a difficult one, it is clear that the educational system has accepted that challenge. Many positive steps have already been taken and much cooperation and collaberation is occuring as we continue to respond to the goal of educating children in more integrated environments.

Problems: Communicating Concerns

Abstract

Parent and professional advocates are resources for families having difficulty obtaining appropriate services for their children. Knowledge of legal rights and effective strategies can be useful tools in the hands of parents.

Diane Ewonce, Parent
Member, Allegheny Intermediate Unit Task Force

Joan B. Kost, Parent
Educational Advocate,
Association for Retarded Citizens
Chairperson, Allegheny Intermediate Unit Task Force

Barbara F. Matera, Esq.,
Director, Educational Advocacy
Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny

Least Restrictive Environment: The Law

The Legal basis for the concept of least restrictive environment is quite broad. This concept has been around as long as the right to education itself. In 1971, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens sued the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, charging that mentally retarded students had the right to a free public education. At that time, it was also demanded that that education take place in as normal a setting as possible.

The resulting PARC Consent Degree of 1972 stipulated:

> *This is the Commonwealth's obligation to place each mentally retarded child in a free, public program of education and training appropriate to the child's capacity,...placement in a regular public school class is preferable to placement in a special public school class and placement in a special public school class is preferable to placement in any other type of program of education and training. PARC v. Commonwealth, Amended Consent Agreement at 11.7.*

When, in 1975, Congress made a free, appropriate, public education the right of every exceptional child in the United States, it too required that that education be provided in the individual child's "least restrictive environment." Specifically, the Eduction for All Handicapped Children's Act (Public Law 94-142) requires that:

> *Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.*

Since individual abilities and needs will vary greatly, those regulations also require that there be "a continuum of alternative placements...to meet the needs of handicapped children for special education and related services."

It is important to note that the law talks about integrating a handicapped child with non-handicapped children only to the extent that such integration is feasible for the individual child, and that many alternatives must be made available for that purpose.

There are parents who would like to have their child in a less restrictive setting, who are told that such a placement is unavailable. On the other hand, there are parents who feel their child is not prepared to leave a special school setting, for whom a change to a regular school building is recommended.

The rights of parents in situations such as these are identical to the rights of all parents with a child in special education. At the annual planning meeting where the child's Individualized Education Program is discussed, parents are encouraged to express their opinions about the educational program of their son or daughter. The school district also makes recommendations. If the parents and school district are unable to reach agreement on part of the child's program - either the content or the setting of that program - either party may request that the matter be settled at a due process hearing.

After that request is made, a pre-hearing conference is scheduled, where all parties meet again to try to reach a solution. If no solution comes from that meeting, the hearing is scheduled within 30 days.

The decision maker at the hearing is the hearing officer, an independent third party who has been trained by the State Department of Education to rule on educational issues. After his decision is issued,

the losing party may make an appeal to the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education. Further appeal may then be made to either Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court or Federal District Court.

Due process procedures, as outlined above, seek to assure that all parties representing the child - from the teacher to the parents - can state their case, and an equitable decision can be reached.

Parents as Advocates

An advocate is someone who speaks for another. Parents must view themselves as the primary expert in regard to their children and be willing to speak out on their behalf.

In order to carry out this responsibility, parents should:

— Keep in touch with their children. Listen to them, giving love and encouragement. Encourge independence, even though it may be a little frightening.
— Keep in close touch with the child's classroom teacher. Visit the classroom.
— Contact the school district when things are going well. Attend board meetings and become generally informed.
— Review the child's records from time to time.
— Attend and take part in the I.E.P. conference. Be certain to have input included. If problems are anticipted, try to take an advocate along to the conference.
— Collect and keep handy a "survival kit". Include copies of records and materials which help explain educational rights.
— Consult with people who are knowledgeable about the child's special needs.

With this type of close involvement, many problems can be prevented. If, however, a problem does arise, the following steps should be followed:

— Talk first with the child's teacher. Move up the chain of command of the local district or intermediate unit, as necessary.
— Contact an advocate for advice. Some sources of advocates are: Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Network (D.D.A.N.), the Local Task Force on the Right to Education, the Association for Retarded Citizens.
— Be willing to meet and remeet to discuss your problem.
— Record each attempt at negotiation, including phone calls. A notebook log is useful to list dates and results of each contact.
— Make requests in writing and ask for written responses.
— Consult with professionals to support your position.
— If no agreement can be reached through all the above channels, utilize the due process procedures the law has provided.

An Advocacy Case

The parent of a 14 year old mentally retarded child described the method she used to secure a least restrictive placement for her daughter. Desiring to have her daughter in a "mainstream" program, this parent first sought information on her legal rights. After consulting with a professional advocate, she attended her child's I.E.P. conference and contested the proposed placement in a special education center. She felt that although her daughter's educational needs could be met in this setting, there would be no opportunity for contact with non-handicapped students and a normalized environment. She then visited special programs within her area to explore other options. After much time and learning, she concluded that a special class in the local junior high school would meet her daughter's instructional needs as well as providing an opportunity for integration. She pursued her recommendation, which she had a right to do as a member of the I.E.P. team. After many meetings and a pre-hearing conference, a concensus was reached and her daughter was placed in the integrated class.

Four months later, the parent describes her daughter's experience thus far as a successful one. She feels her daughter is excited and motivated by this new opportunity and she is confident that she made the choice that was in her daughter's best interest. Although no one is ever positive that they have made the right decision, parents should be encouraged to actively pursue their convictions and goals for the future of their chilren.

Conclusion

As school systems continue to grow in their ability to meet the needs of individual children, grevious problems should dwindle. The system is simply too big and too complex, however, for the legislature or the state department of education to ever assure appropriate services to all children. Parents must continue to assume the major responsibility for their child's education, and be willing to become actively involved in assuring that their child's needs are met.

Vocational Opportunities in the Least Restrictive Environment

Abstract

Proper planning for the vocational needs of disabled students in the Least Restrictive Environment is a responsibility of both parents and educators. The process must start early and be comprehensive if it is to assist a student in reaching his vocational potential.

Anthony H. Adduci
Rehabilitation Counselor
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Johnnye Bernstein
School Psychological Intern
Keystone Oaks School District

Lawrence E. Doperak
Psychological Consultant
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Planning

For handicapped individuals, the process of vocational planning can be complex and long term. Parents need to be very aware of their child's abilities as well as the vocational alternatives available in order to make good decisions.

Vocational planning in its true form involves two areas: vocational counseling and vocational training. Both are equally important in preparing a disabled student to become as productive and independent as his abilities allow. Parents can and should play an active role in both phases.

Student Information

Before training is provided to a student, much groundwork is required. There are several areas of analysis which are forerunners to the determination of what type of training would be most beneficial.

Determination of the student's ability. For most students in special education, there is abundant information available on academic achievement. In planning, it is important to take a look at this information in a vocational light. What skills does the student presently have that are prerequisite to independent living and working? A decision should be made in terms of what further academic training can be supplied to enable him to benefit from future vocational training.

Determination of the student's interests and feelings. The emotional state of an individual should weigh heavily on any planning decisions. Look carefully at present behavior such as acting out or withdrawal and try to determine the cause. Look at feelings toward school and frustration levels. For example, if a 16 year old student is frustrated or turned off to his present instructional program, waiting till age 17 to introduce vocational training may be too late. The student may drop out of school before the change is instituted.

A student's interests also must be assessed. What work areas or activities attract him? What are his family and community models? How does he feel about these two influences?

Vocational Counseling

Once the student has been looked at from various perspectives, the process of vocational counseling can begin. This should begin at an early age and parents should be active participants.

At this stage, the goal is to expose a student to a wide variety of experiences. This exposure is crucial prior to providing training for a specific skill. The school can meet this goal through career education and basic training in areas such as shop, home economics, clerical skills, etc. Specific decisions should be made at the I.E.P. conference considering the student's abilities and interests. Parents can help by assuring that their child has adequate community exposure. Going to a store to watch the clerk or stock boy, visiting a factory to see assembly line workers, or incorporating cleaning chores or yard work into the home experience can provide students with a basis from which they can determine their interests and skills. Also, this will assist the parent and school in breaking the stereotype that handicapped students can only train for sheltered employment. Not only a student's education but his future work experience can occur in the less restrictive environment of his community if it is properly planned for.

While this exposure is going on, a determination should also be made of what are the realistic vocational opportunities available in the student's community. If a student has an interest or skill in an area in which there is no job market, this must be channeled into an avenue having greater potential. Future implications should also be considered such as, does this training have any generalizability or would the individual be limited to one task for life?

Are there social needs which this type of job would negate, such as contact with other workers?

Setting Goals

Once the student's abilities and interests are assessed and he has been "educated" to a variety of possibilities, a match can then be made to potential vocational opportunities.

Once this "goal" is set, at an I.E.P. conference, the necessary vocational training can then be specified.

Vocational Training

Whatever goal has been set, there are a variety of services which can be utilized to help attain it. The first is academic training. There are generally skills of an academic nature which relate to any vocation. For instance, counting and packaging objects requires basic mathematical concepts. Thus, the I.E.P. should reflect specific academic objectives which relate to the overall vocational goals.

Secondly, the vocational skills training must be clearly specified and planned on a long range basis. The resources of the school must be identified and utilized to help the student acquire the skills he will need. Frequently, one must look beyond the school the student attends to the total educational system to find the necessary vocational resources. Vocational centers and trade schools can provide valuable opportunities to many students. Other types of training can occur within the student's neighborhood school.

Finally, there may be community services such as social or recreational programs, which can contribute to the overall goals of independent functioning. Knowledge of transportation systems, social skills, and general community awareness all help maximize a student's potential.

It is important to carefully and creatively look at all the resources in order to identify a program which will develop the desired skills for a student.

Parent Participation

For handicapped students, vocational planning and training frequently lacks the emphasis that it deserves. Parents must play an active role in assuring that their child leaves school with training which realizes his potential.

At an early age, parents should start to look for and question the components of the I.E.P. which develop independent and work related skills. They should constantly use the knowledge which only they have about their child to think about what he can potentially do. And even more importantly perhaps, they should assist in the development of independent and job related skills in the home environment. In addition, ongoing exposure to the community and varied experiences can have great value.

Finally, parents must monitor their child's I.E.P. and continually question the long term utility of the goals which have been set for the child. They must be willing to ask for services they know their child needs.

It is obvious in many school systems that the better vocational programs, equipment, and facilities are for non-handicapped students. Given the rights of P.L. 94-142 for education in the Least Restrictive Environment, parents should be willing to actively seek for their child to have access to the vocational training schools and to demand that programs within these schools be adapted to accomodate the needs of handicapped students.

Professional advocates can be very useful in this process. If an advocate clearly presents himself as representing the best interests of the family and not an agency, then their input should be welcomed.

Organized parent and advocacy groups can apply legal and political pressure to assure not only access to appropriate vocational training programs within a school system, but also the availability of more job placements after school. The need for more sheltered workshops and other types of supervised employment is great.

In addition, these groups can do much through positive public relations efforts to foster a better understanding of the employability of the handicapped by competitive employers.

Conclusion

The enactment of Public Law 94-142, guaranteeing the right of all students to appropriate education, including vocational education, does not ensure that each student will be provided with the counseling and training he needs and deserves.

Parents, educators, and the vocational community must work together to assure that vocational planning begins early, that training is comprehensive and realistic throughout the student's school program, and that services follow him into the community and into job placements.

Q: What type of vocational services are available for severely and profoundly handicapped individuals?

A: Most school systems only offer vocational training to these students within the confines of a classroom setting. Some systems, however, do

offer special vocational centers for skill development. Others, although limited in number, have developed vocational training programs for severely handicapped within their regular vocational training facility. Again, the provision of appropriate services is an area needing organized parent advocacy. The knowledge does exist to provide training to these students.

After graduation, The Vocational Rehabilitation Center in Pittsburgh offers a 9 month "extended evaluation and training" program for the severely handicapped.

Open Panel of State and Local Administrators

Abstract

The ultimate responsibility for providing educational services rests with the state and local educational agencies. The State Department of Education establishes policies and standards on Least Restrictive Environment which local services can be measured against.

Gary J. Makuch, Ed. D.
Director, Bureau of Special and
Compensatory Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education

D. Roger Meehan, Ph. D.
Associate Executive Director
Exceptional Children Program
Allegheny Intermediate Unit

William Penn, Ph. D.
Director, Special Education
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Jane Sullivan
Regional Reviewer for Allegheny County
Pennsylvania Department of Education

State Department of Education's Position

Dr. Makuch stated that at an administrative level, there is a strong belief that educating children in the least restrictive environment is a sound practice. The basic motivation behind L.R.E. is a belief that educating handicapped and non-handicapped children together is beneficial to both groups. He expressed that even if the laws did not mandate this practice, Pennsylvania would still be moving in that direction.

From the State's perspective, in order to effectively implement L.R.E., the following must occur:

1. There must be a continuum or cascade of services: a series of placement options. The State Department of Education expects that for every handicapped youngster in Pennsylvania, there will be a number of possible placements for that child, at least one of which provides for the opportunity for contact with the non-handicapped. This must occur without exception. All children, including the severely and multiply handicapped, must have options available to them.
2. Multidisciplinarian evaluations must be provided for all students to assure that proper assesments are made.
3. I.E.P.s must be properly written with equal input from parents and educators. In addition, an honest and sincere consideration must be given to the options available, recognizing the value that contact with the non-handicapped can have. If, however, there are no placement options available, then a conscious choice can not be made as to which is appropriate for a given child.

The State Department has the responsibility for seeing that all three conditions are met by local educational agencies. That is, they must assure that options exist, that proper evaluations occur, and that the I.E.P. development process is followed.

The State does not see its role as second guessing the individual decisions made by an I.E.P. team. If the proper procedures are followed with an honest consideration of all placement options, then we must assume that the team has made a decision in the best interest of the child.

As the State attempts to guide and monitor the locals in providing least restrictive options, it will focus on the system as a whole. The main emphasis will be on assuring the provision of the continuum of services. If it is discovered that in practice, however, all students of a particular disability group are assigned to one option, there is a good indication that viable options do not truly exist. For example, if all students classified as Trainable Mentally Retarded are assigned to segregated centers, we must seriously question whether individual decisions are being made. If groups of children are being placed in one option simply as a result of their classification, the development of the I.E.P. has simply been a mechanical procedure and not an individual decision making process.

Dr. Makuch emphasized that the disabled are a tremendously heterogeneous group and that different students need different services. The State will continue to challenge those who place students into programs only on the basis of their classification.

Parental Rights

On an individual basis, there are mechanisms

available to parents to challenge services provided for their children. The Due Process Hearing is always available to parents and educators who disagree with a decision that has been made.

In addition, the State Department of Education has a Division of Regional Review which has individual monitoring functions. After each due process case, a Regional Reviewer checks on the implementation of the Hearing Officer's decision. This individual is also available to respond to allegations made by parents or consumer groups and to suggest remedies if a local system is found not to be providing services consistent with the law or state policy.

Question and Answer Period

Q: Many parents feel there is a conflict between the State and Intermediate Units, in which parents are caught in the middle. The local systems seem to have as a priority, developing new programs in the L.R.E. This seems to be in response to mandates by the State. Although many parents agree with the concept, it seems that the children suffer because instead of their needs being individually looked at, the I.U.s are hurrying to meet those goals that the State desires them to accomplish.

A: Dr. Makuch responded that it must be clearly remembered that Public Law 94-142 was passed in 1975. From the State's perspective, there has been sufficient time for local systems to respond on a gradual basis. In many instances however, there has been very little development. The State feels an obligation to apply some pressure to assure progress.

The State has not imposed quotas in terms of numbers of students or classes which need to be in less restrictive settings. It has emphasized the development of options, leaving the decision of which students are to be placed where and when up to individual I.E.P. teams.

Our goal should be to provide consistency in services across Pennsylvania and across the nation. A parent whose child moves to Allegheny County from another region or state, should have the same options available. Children should not have to go from an integrated to a segregated program, or vice versa, simply because there are no alternatives.

Dr. Meehan added that at a local level, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit is committed to the development of new options, but that in a system as large as I.U. 3, change is not easy and takes time.

Within I.U. 3, the emphasis is being placed on creating options for the mentally retarded (E.M.R., T.M.R., and S/PMR) and the multiply handicapped. There already is a continuum of services for the other disabilities.

He emphasized that children are not, and never will be, moved as a group. Parental rights will be respected and each decision will be made on an individual basis.

There is a strong knowledge base available through the use of consultants and from looking at L.R.E. classes in areas such as Learning Disabilities, Hearing Impaired, and Visually Impaired. A unique problem is created when students are moved "back" from segregated to integrated settings. The I.U. will continue to look at the wide range of opinions on how such moves should be made and to continually adjust and change methods as they learn through this process.

It was emphasized that the I.U. will respond to the intent of the law, providing options for each child. The establishment of classes, although not an easy process, has been successful in the past. This expertise will be applied to the new classes and programs.

Q: How soon will the Pittsburgh Public Schools, I.U. 2, begin to provide placement options other than a segregated center for Trainable Mentally Retarded students?

A: Dr. Penn explained that moving classes has a tremendous cost factor. Each new class costs $20,000 to $40,000. Until the financial resources are available, no movement will occur. Due to the declining enrollment in the city schools there should be, within the next 5 years, money available for L.R.E. classes. It sounds easy to do but we have to be realistic. Just telling the I.U.s to do something does not mean the resources will be available to do it.

Q: It seems there has been more pressure on the County (Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3) than on the City (Pittsburgh Public Schools) to establish L.R.E. classes. Is this true, and if so, why?

A: Dr. Makuch responded that several years ago, the Federal Government cited Pennsylvania for the lack of L.R.E. classes in I.U. 3. An Office of Civil Rights complaint was also filed against the county. As a result, an emphasis has been placed on I.U. 3.

Each Intermediate Unit is, however, required to submit a plan describing how they will provide a continuum of services to all exceptionalities. Parents should become familiar with the plan for their area.

Conference Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation of the conference was performed by Dr. Harry R. Faulk of the Educational Management Development Center at Carnegie Mellon University. A 33 page report describes the results of the conference from a number of perspectives.

Using the conference program and the eight objectives which the planning committee had generated, an evaluation instrument was constructed. This instrument was designed to identify the degree to which the participants felt the objectives of the conference were reached, determined by the amount of learning they gained in each area. The responses were asked for on a five point scale with 1 being very little and 5 being a great amount. Of the 146 persons in attendance, 62 usable questionnaires were returned by parents, and 18 by professional persons. All responses were tabulated in two categories: parents and professional persons.

The conclusion of the evaluative report was that the conference was an overwhelming success. Each participant had an opportunity to participate in nine of fifteen different experiences or sessions. In rating these experiences, parents gave over 60 per cent 4 and 5 responses to 12 out of 15 sessions. Seven of the sessions had over 70 per cent 4 and 5 responses.

The data showed that for six of the eight objectives, almost two-thirds of the parents responded with a 4 or 5, indicating a high level of information gained. The objective which was most highly attained was: to prepare parents for a more active role in determining their own child's educational program.

Additional data organized into 18 tables, as well as the written comments by participants, all indicated that the conference was found to be very useful by those in attendance.

TABLE 1

VALUE OF CONFERENCE TO PARTICIPANTS

	Very Little 1		2		3		4		Great Amount 5	
Overall, how valuable was the conference?	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Parents	1	2	0	0	11	19	17	29	29	50
Professional Persons	0	0	0	0	5	28	6	33	7	39

(Total number of respondents: Parents=58, Professional Persons=18)

TABLE 2

EXTENT TO WHICH PARENTS GAINED INFORMATION ON GOALS OF CONFERENCE

To what extent:	Very Little 1 n	%	2 n	%	3 n	%	4 n	%	Great Amount 5 n	%
1. Did you learn about past and present practices for integrating exceptional children into society and into the educational system?	1	3	5	8	18	29	23	37	15	24
2. Did you learn about different types of programs in the least restrictive environment?	2	3	3	5	15	24	20	32	23	36
3. Did you learn how to evaluate a program option to determine its ability to meet a child's needs?	0	0	8	13	13	21	14	23	27	43
4. Did you gain a perspective on attitudes towards integration of exceptional persons?	11	2	5	8	16	27	17	28	21	35
5. Did you learn how parents can become more active in decisions regarding their own child's educational program?	1	2	2	3	9	14	25	40	26	41
6. Did you learn how to communicate and become more active in working with school systems?	1	2	3	5	15	25	12	20	29	48
7. Did you learn about the laws which mandate a least restrictive environment and the rationale behind them?	5	8	10	6	26	42	13	21	8	13
8. Did you learn about available resources for additonal information on integration and education in the least restrictive environment?	4	6	7	11	27	44	11	18	13	21

(Total number of respondents=62)

TABLE 3

EXTENT TO WHICH PROFESSIONAL PERSONS GAINED INFORMATION ON GOALS OF CONFERENCE

	Very Little 1 n	%	2 n	%	3 n	%	Great Amount 4 n	%	5 n	%
1. Did you learn about past and present practices for integrating exceptional children into society and into the educational system?	0	0	2	11	5	28	9	50	2	11
2. Did you learn about different types of programs in the least restrictive environment?	0	0	2	11	6	33	5	28	5	28
3. Did you learn how to evaluate a program option to determine its ability to meet a child's needs?	0	0	1	6	4	24	5	29	7	41
4. Did you gain a perspective on attitudes towards integration of exceptional persons?	1	6	1	6	4	22	6	33	6	33
5. Did you learn how parents can become more active in decisions regarding their own child's educational program?	0	0	2	12	3	18	5	29	7	41
6. Did you learn how to communicate and become more active in working with school systems?	1	6	2	11	4	22	4	22	7	39
7. Did you learn about the laws which mandate a least restrictive environment and the rationale behind them?	2	11	0	0	7	41	4	24	4	24
8. Did you learn about available resources for additional information on integration and education in the least restrictive environment?	2	11	1	6	5	28	8	44	2	11

(Total number of respondents=18)

Informational Resources

The following is a partial list of agencies providing information and/or consultation to parents of the handicapped.

Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
Allegheny County Chapter
Middle and Suisman Streets
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
(412) 231-7977

Association for Retarded Citizens, Allegheny
1001 Brighton Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15233
(412) 322-6008

Closer Look
The National Information Center for the Handicapped
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013

Council for Exceptional Children
Western Pennsylvania Chapter
1224 McNeilly Avenue, #2
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Network
3540 North Progress Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110
(717) 657-3320
Toll free in Pennsylvania (800) 692-7443

Developmental Disabilities Law Project
University of Pittsburgh, School of Law
Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
(412) 624-6230

REACH, Western Pennsylvania Special Education
Regional Resource Center
5347 William Flynn Highway, Route 8
Gibsonia, PA 15044
(412) 443-7821

South Hills Child Guidance Center
Suite 302, 300 Mt. Lebanon Blvd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15243
(412) 343-7166

United Cerebral Palsy
4638 Centre Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 683-7100

United Mental Health
401 Wood Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 391-3820

Local and State Educational Agencies

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Education
333 Market Street, Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 17126
Bureau of Special and Compensatory Education
(717) 783-1264
Right to Education Office
(717) 787-9880

Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Exceptional Children Program
2 Allegheny Center, Suite 1300
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
(412) 323-5700

Pittsburgh Board of Education
Division of Special Education
Morningside School
Greenwood and Jancey Streets
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
(412) 665-4976